

REMARKS

Favorable consideration of this Application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

After entry of the foregoing Amendment, Claims 1-11, 13-23, and 25 are pending in the present Application. Claims 12 and 24 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 13 and 25 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of canceled Claims 12 and 24. No new matter has been added.

By way of summary, the Official Action presents the following issues: Claims 1, 3, 10, 11, 13, 15, 22, 23, and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Arisaka et al. (JP 06006495 A, hereinafter Arisaka); Claims 1, 13, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Tsutsui et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,668,158, hereinafter Tsutsui); Claims 1-11, 13-23, and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Arai (U.S. Patent No. 6,714,920).

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter. To this end, Claims 1, 13 and 25 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable Claims 12 and 24. Thus, Claims 1, 13, and 25 are believed to be in formal condition for allowance. Likewise, the remaining pending claims are allowable by virtue of dependency to these allowable claims.

As independent Claims 1, 13, and 25, and by virtue of dependency, their corresponding dependent claims, have been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter, Applicants respectfully submit that the outstanding rejections pertaining to these pending claims outlined in paragraphs 2-4 of the Official Action have been rendered moot.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the Information Disclosure Statements (IDS's) filed January 29, 2001, June 4, 2004, and January 31, 2005. Applicants note that these IDS's have yet to be indicated as considered by the Examiner. As such, Applicants respectfully requests that the Examiner provide initialed Forms 1449 in the next communication.

CONCLUSION

If the Examiner believes that any additional formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this Application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience to address such issues.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present Application, including Claims 1-11, 13-23, and 25, is patently distinguished over the prior art, in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

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